

Message Text

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

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TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (KISSINGER)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT LA TIMES EDITORIAL MONDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1976, HEADED "THE KISSINGER PAPERS AS HISTORY."

2. SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER HAS DECIDED TO GIVE HIS OFFICIAL PAPERS--MOST OF THEM, ANYWAY--TO THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS WHEN HE LEAVES OFFICE, UNDER STRICT BUT NOT UNPRECEDENTED CONDITIONS LIMITING ACCESS TO THEM. IT WILL BE AT LEAST 25 YEARS BEFORE THE PAPERS ARE OPENED TO THE PUBLIC THOUGH SERIOUS RESEARCHERS CAN SEE THEM BEFORE THEN, IF THEY HAVE A SECURITY CLEARANCE AND KISSINGER'S PERSONAL APPROVAL.

3. THESE ARE REASONABLE RESTRICTIONS. KISSINGER'S ACTIVITIES, FIRST AS HEAD OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL AND LATER AS SECRETARY OF STATE, INVOLVED MATTERS OF THE GREATEST POLITICAL, INTELLIGENCE AND DIPLOMATIC SENSITIVITY. BECAUSE
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MANY OF THE ISSUES AND PEOPLE KISSINGER DEALT WITH ARE STILL WITH US, SOME DISCRETION IN THE MANAGEMENT OF HIS FILES CLEARLY IS CALLED FOR.

4. THIS QUESTION OF RESPONSIBLE DELAY IN MAKING THE RECORD PUBLIC RAISES A TICKLISH POINT, HOWEVER.

5. IT IS NO SECRET THAT KISSINGER HAS BEEN OFFERED A LOT OF MONEY FOR PUBLICATION RIGHTS TO HIS MEMOIRS, AND, GIVEN THE WORLDWIDE INTEREST IN ALL THE THINGS HE HAS DONE IN PUBLIC LIFE, IT IS A GOOD BET THAT THOSE MEMOIRS WILL APPEAR BEFORE LONG. CERTAINLY THEY CAN BE EXPECTED TO DRAW HEAVILY ON THE DOCUMENTARY RECORD AMASSED DURING KISSINGER'S WASHINGTON YEARS. AND THAT BRINGS US TO THE TICKLISH POINT.

6. HOW MUCH CAN KISSINGER TELL WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF DISCRETION THAT HE HIMSELF HAS SET? WILL HE BE ABLE TO WRITE CANDIDLY AND COMPREHENSIVELY ABOUT EVENTS OF CONTINUING IMPORTANCE, AND ABOUT WORLD LEADERS WHO CONTINUE IN POWER, WITHOUT VIOLATING THOSE NECESSARY CONDITIONS OF CONFIDENTIALITY THAT GOVERN ACCESS TO HIS PAPERS?

7. THE ANSWER, OF COURSE, IS THAT ONLY TIME WILL TELL. CERTAINLY, THOUGH, IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO UNDERESTIMATE KISSINGER'S INGENUITY IN PUTTING OUT TO THE PUBLIC THE THINGS HE WANTS TO PUT OUT, CONFIDENTIAL OR NOT.

8. IT IS NOW KNOWN, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT KISSINGER HAD TRANSCRIPTS MADE OF ALL HIS TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS, THOUGH HE DID NOT BOTHER TO INFORM PERSONS ON THE OTHER END OF THE LINE THAT A RECORD WAS BEING MADE OF WHAT WAS SAID.

9. KISSINGER REFUSES TO DEPOSIT THESE TRANSCRIPTS WITH HIS OTHER OFFICIAL PAPERS, CLAIMING THAT THEY ARE PERSONAL. INDEED THEY ARE, AND TO MORE THAN ONE PERSON. POSSESSING UNCLASSIFIED

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THEM SHOULD GIVE KISSINGER A CONSIDERABLE IF NOT ALWAYS HONORABLE ADVANTAGE WHEN IT COMES TO WRITING HIS VERSION OF HISTORY. (END TEXT)
ROBINSON

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